What should be the main priority of a premed student enrolled at Xavier?  GRADES!! GRADES!! GRADES!! In order to be minimally competitive, a student typically needs mostly "As" and "Bs" to get into medical school and grades almost as high to get into dental school and other health professions programs. Therefore, you must give grades first priority starting immediately and continue to do so throughout enrollment!!

Do science grades have special importance? Yes!!! Medical, dental, etc. schools generally look at grades in the sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics = BCPM) separately from your grades in other courses (or your overall GPA). As a result, most health professions schools (and summer enrichment and research programs for premeds) will scrutinize two (2) separate GPAs: your cumulative overall GPA (i.e. all grades earned in college) AND your BCPM GPA (all BCPM grades earned in college).

The Two Stages of the Evaluation of an Application to Medical, Dental, etc. School: Evaluation of an application for health professions schools generally takes place in two stages. In the first stage, admissions committees ask: "Can the applicant handle the academic load (the equivalent of about 40 hours a semester)?" Grades, MCAT/DAT and other admission test scores, and (sometimes) letters of evaluation are used to answer this question. If the answer to the first question is "Yes", the admissions committees then proceed to the second stage to ask: "Will the applicant be a good physician/dentist?" Evaluations and the written portions of the application (personal statement, post-secondary experiences, etc.) are used to obtain a preliminary answer to this question. If it appears that the answer to this question is "Yes," applicants are hopefully invited for an interview; after which, a final decision is made.

What kind of grades does a student at XU need to get into medical school or other types of health professions schools? Again, in order to be minimally competitive for most health professions schools, a student should have earned mostly "As" and "Bs" by the time he/she applies to professional school (usually the summer between junior and senior years). In terms of GPA, we have found that a cumulative overall GPA of 3.5 or higher AND a cumulative BCPM GPA of 3.5 or higher really help to make the case to admissions committees that the applicant can handle the academic rigors of medical, dental, etc. school (although, there are certainly students who have gained admission with slightly lower GPAs). In an effort to provide the most informed guidance to individual Xavier students, the Premedical Office regularly reviews applicant data, both XU and national, when it is made available by medical, dental, etc. school application services. To understand the impact that academic performance has on the admissions process for medical, dental, etc. school, we encourage you to review national data for students previously accepted into medical, dental and other types of health professions schools as well as school-specific applicant data that may be available. CAUTION: As mentioned above, there are some health professions schools that are not as competitive, in terms of GPA, when compared to other schools. However, having a better chance of gaining entry into a particular type of school does NOT mean that the curriculum at the school will be less challenging. ALL health professions schools and related graduate programs are rigorous, so you should be developing the skills and academic foundation to not only gain admission into medical, dental, etc. school but to also successfully COMPLETE professional school!

In addition to academic performance, admissions committees at health professions schools also consider entrance exam performance (e.g. MCAT, DAT, etc.) and post-secondary extracurricular experiences. For more detailed information regarding school specific GPA, entrance exam scores, and other selection factors, please refer to the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) online tool made available by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC); the Osteopathic Medical College Information Book (CIB) made available by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM);
the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools made available by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA); and similar resources for the health professions program that you are interested in. Copies of admission requirements resources for some health professions schools are available for review in the Premedical Office. You may also contact the schools that you are interested in or visit official school websites for more information regarding the profiles of accepted applicants.

General Advice Regarding Withdrawing from and Retaking Courses: Remember, you are trying to convince admissions committees, first and foremost, that you can handle the academic rigors of medical, dental, etc. school. Even if you don't have a 4.0 overall GPA and BCPM GPA, you can still gain admission into health professions school!!! You MUST, however, show admission committees by way of your semester-by-semester and overall academic performance that a) you can handle the academic rigors of health professions school and b) even if you faced challenges in any courses, you are able to learn from your experience, work hard, and make improvements accordingly.

You should work hard NOT to earn a grade of "C" or below in any class and avoid withdrawing from classes after the add/drop date, if possible. However, if you must withdraw from a class because a) you are not certain you will earn at least a “C” and/or b) your scholarship or other financial aid is at risk, you must make the best decision for you. It is imperative, however, that you NOT make withdrawing from courses and/or earning “Cs” (or below) a trend on your academic record. When withdrawals (i.e. “W”) or grades of “C” or below become a routine occurrence on your transcript, it may be difficult to convince admissions committees that you can handle the rigors of medical, dental, etc. school.

You should also avoid retaking classes in which you earn a "C" or better. Why? Well, if you retake a class in which you earned a "B" or "C", then most admissions committees would expect you to improve your performance (i.e. since you already knew enough material to perform, at least, on an average level). Rather than to rely on retaking to demonstrate your academic ability in a course in which you earned a "B" or "C", it is probably better to learn from your mistakes and NOT earn any more "Cs" (or below) in your REMAINING coursework (i.e. courses that you have not yet taken). Show admissions committees your scholastic ability by earning competitive grades in all remaining classes rather than spending time and money to retake classes in which you earned grades of “B” or “C.” Be advised, while XU includes only the higher grade earned in a repeated course when calculating GPA, health professions schools will count EACH GRADE EARNED IN A REPEATED COURSE towards your GPA. NOTE: If you believe that retaking a class that you earned a “B” or “C” is necessary because you do not have a decent grasp on the content of the course OR because you need to improve your GPA for scholarship purposes, then it may be worthwhile to consider retaking.

What should a student do if his/her grades are NOT competitive enough for application to medical, dental, etc. school by the end of junior year? What if a student is not on track with his/her science courses by the end of junior year? If your overall and BCPM GPAs are not competitive at the end of junior year, you should consider delaying application to health professions school to give yourself time to significantly improve your academic record and prepare for entrance exams. In some cases, this means taking advantage of special programs (e.g. post-baccalaureate programs) after graduating from XU to enhance your credentials before applying to health professions school.

If you will NOT be finished with the required courses you need for medical, dental, etc. school when it’s time to apply (typically the summer between junior and senior years), then you should consider extending your enrollment at XU if necessary and delaying application to medical, dental, etc. school. The goal is to position yourself to have the most competitive overall GPA, BCPM GPA, entrance exam scores, and post-secondary experience for application to health professions school. If delayed application and/or extended enrollment at Xavier will help you become a more competitive applicant, we encourage you to give yourself that opportunity. AND, if you decide to apply to health professions school AFTER graduating from Xavier, the Premedical Office will assist you, provided you let us know in a timely fashion that you want our guidance.

Comments about Going to Graduate School Before Enrolling in Medical, Dental, etc. School: If your undergraduate grades weren't competitive, good performance in a biomedical science or related graduate program might help you get into medical, dental, etc. school since it may show that you can handle the academic load. However, you should not enter a graduate school thinking that doing so guarantees that you will gain admission into medical, dental, etc. school. Also, do not think that you should merely enroll in a graduate program to have "something to do" for a year while reapplying to professional school because most medical, dental, etc. schools won't seriously consider graduate students for admission unless they are on track to complete their degree program before entering professional schools. Students who plan on enrolling in graduate school and later apply to medical, dental, etc. school should do so because they have a genuine interest in pursuing a graduate degree, whether they gain acceptance into professional school or not.

Post-Baccalaureate Programs: The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) compiles a list of schools that offer Post-baccalaureate Premedical Programs for students who are interested in applying to medical school and already have Bachelor's degrees. These programs are often very structured and vary in focus. Go to https://students-residents.aamc.org/postbac/ to review the list of available programs and to determine which programs BEST suit your need. There are also post-baccalaureate programs
for students who are interested in gaining admission into dental school. Explore individual medical, dental, etc. schools to see if they have special programs available for applicants who hope to enhance their application credentials.

What types of grades and entrance exam (MCAT, DAT, etc.) scores are medical, dental, and other health professions schools looking for???

Below are resources that you can use to review GPA, entrance exam, and other important data for different types of health professions schools (if links don't work, copy and paste into browser OR perform internet search using keywords).

**Medical School (MD):**

- Tables A-18 and A-23 at [https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/](https://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/) for MCAT and GPAs of applicants and matriculants (FY1, matriculant=enrolled student)
- AAMC Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) at [https://services.aamc.org/msar/home#null](https://services.aamc.org/msar/home#null) (NOTE: We do NOT recommend purchasing access to this tool at this time because data changes every year. If there is information you'd like to access in MSAR at this time, please see Ms. QV)

**Medical School (DO):**

- Applicant & Matriculant reports at [http://www.aacom.org/reports-programs-initiatives/aacom-reports/matriculants](http://www.aacom.org/reports-programs-initiatives/aacom-reports/matriculants)

**Dental School:**

- DAT and GPA data for applicants and matriculants at [http://www.adea.org/data/students/](http://www.adea.org/data/students/)
- School-specific data available in the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools (available for you review in the Premed Office; we do NOT recommend purchasing this book at this time because data changes every year)

**Veterinary School:**


**Optometry School:**

- Applicant data at [https://optometriceducation.org/student-profile-prerequisites/](https://optometriceducation.org/student-profile-prerequisites/)

**Podiatry School:**


**Physician Assistant:**

- School-specific applicant data at [http://directory.paeaonline.org](http://directory.paeaonline.org)

**Physical Therapy:**

- Applicant data report at [http://www.ptcas.org/About/](http://www.ptcas.org/About/)

*IF THE TYPE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOL YOU ARE INTERESTED IN APPLYING TO IS NOT LISTED ABOVE, PLEASE VISIT OFFICIAL WEBSITES OF SPECIFIC SCHOOLS FOR MORE INFORMATION.*